GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1893
ANSWERED ON:04.08.2005
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEDIA
Badiga Shri Ramakrishna

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any plan to lay down any code of conduct of the media;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the step proposed to be taken to make media more responsible?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY)

(a) to (c): Prasar Bharati has Programme and Advertising Codes which, inter-alia, prohibit telecast/ broadcast of any programme or advertisement, which contains anything obscene and vulgar. Doordarshan and All India Radio abide by the codes while telecasting/ broadcasting their programmes.

The programmes of all Satellite Channels, when transmitted/ retransmitted through cable television networks in the country, are required to adhere to the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Rules framed thereunder. The Programme Code prohibits carriage of such programmes in Cable Service, which offend good taste or decency, contain anything obscene, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals.

Action for violations of the codes can be taken by any authorized officer i.e. SDM, DM or Commissioner of Police or any other officer notified in the official gazette by the Central Government or State Government.

The Central Government has constituted two inter-ministerial Committees under Section 20 of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 to look into the violations of the Programme and Advertising Code. The Government is also contemplating establishment of an autonomous authority to regulate content on TV channels.

The Press in India is free from Government control. The Press Council of India (PCI) is a statutory authority established for preserving the freedom of the Press and for maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. PCI has also set norms for Journalistic Ethics which, covers principles and ethics with regard to journalism as also guidelines on reporting the specific issues of public and national importance.

The PCI takes cognizance suo moto, or looks into specific complaints, against obscene and vulgar advertisements in print media.